

MARVEL[®] COMICS



© 1991 MARVEL
ENT. GROUP, INC. TM

\$1.75 US
\$2.25 CAN
35
MAR
UK 75p

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY



EXCALIBUR™



50
YEARS
A



OF
CAPTAIN AMERICA
1941 — 1991

THE POWERFUL CAPTAIN BRITAIN, THE SHAPE-CHANGING MEGGAN, THE INTANGIBLE SHADOWCAT, THE SWASHBUCKLING NIGHTCRAWLER, THE MYSTERIOUS PHOENIX, THE EVER-UNPREDICTABLE WIDGET AND LOCKHEED THE DRAGON FORGED IN THE FIRES OF THEIR TRAGIC PASTS, THEY HAVE BANDED TOGETHER TO FIGHT A MODERN DAY CRUSADE AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL! STAN LEE PRESENTS...

EXCALIBUR

HEARTBREAKER

LOBDELL/ROSS/MILGROM/OLIVER/LOPEZ/KAVANAGH/DEFALCO

EXCALIBUR
CREATED BY
CLAREMONT
AND
DAVIS

SHE HAD IT ALL PLANNED.

SOMEDAY WHEN PRINCESS DI
DIDN'T WANT TO BE PRINCESS
ANYMORE, AMY WOULD BE
THE NEW ONE.

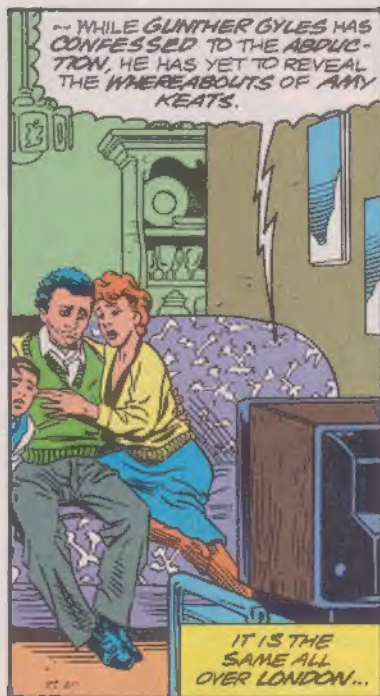
AT SIX YEARS OLD, HER
POLITICAL AGENDA CONSISTED
OF MAKING BROCCOLI AGAINST
THE LAW.

OH, AND EVERYONE
WOULD HAVE A CAT.

THAT WAS THREE DAYS AGO.

LIFE HAS A WAY OF CHANGING
ONE'S PRIORITIES... EVEN AT
SIX YEARS OLD.

EXCALIBUR™ Vol. 1, No. 35, March, 1991. (ISSN #1045-1366) Published by MARVEL COMICS, Jerry Stewart, President, Stan Lee, Publisher, Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Published monthly. Copyright © 1991 by Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price \$1.75 per copy in the U.S. and \$2.25 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: U.S. \$21.00; Canada \$26.00; and foreign \$33.00. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. EXCALIBUR (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO EXCALIBUR, c/o MARVEL COMICS, 9TH FLOOR, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Printed in Canada



... WHILE GUNTHER GYLES HAS
CONFERRED TO THE ABDUC-
TION, HE HAS YET TO REVEAL
THE WHEREABOUTS OF AMY
KEATS.

IT IS THE
SAME ALL
OVER LONDON...



... A CITY OF STRANGERS
MOURNS THE PLIGHT OF
A MISSING CHILD.

HAVE THEY
FOUND ME? SHHHH!

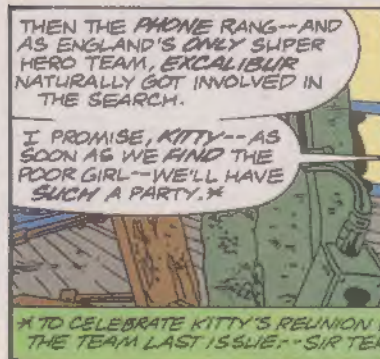
WE WERE ALL GOING
TO JUMP OUT OF THE
CLOSET AND SHOUT
"WELCOME HOME!"

WE HAD BOUGHT
A CAKE AND
EVERYTHING.

THAT WAS THE
PLAN, ANYWAY.

GYLES' HISTORY OF MENTAL
ILLNESS HAS... "COMPLICATED"
SCOTLAND YARD'S EFFORTS
TO LOCATE THE GIRL.

BUT WE HAVE HUNDREDS
OF VOLUNTEERS SCOURING
GREATER LONDON EVEN AS
WE SPEAK.



THEN THE PHONE RANG--AND
AS ENGLAND'S ONLY SUPER
HERO TEAM, EXCALIBUR
NATURALLY GOT INVOLVED IN
THE SEARCH.

I PROMISE, KITTY--AS
SOON AS WE FIND THE
POOR GIRL--WE'LL HAVE
SUCH A PARTY.*

* TO CELEBRATE KITTY'S REUNION WITH
THE TEAM LAST ISSUE. --SIR TERRY



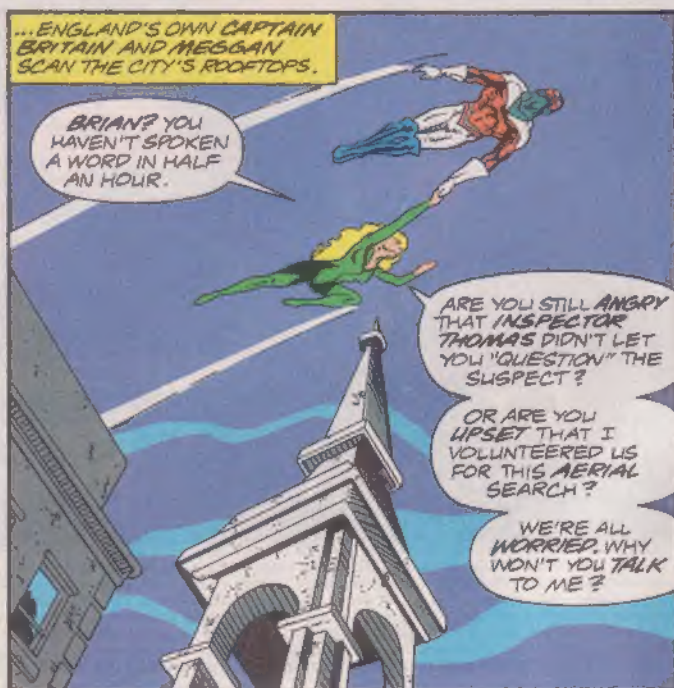
NO NEED TO
APOLOGIZE,
KITTY...



... JUST
PROMISE ME
WE CAN INVITE
AMY?

WE'LL DO
OUR
BEST,
KATZCHEN.

WHILE SHADOWCAT AND NIGHTCRAWLER
CONTINUE THEIR SEARCH OF
ABANDONED BUILDINGS IN THE AREA AMY
WAS LAST SEEN...



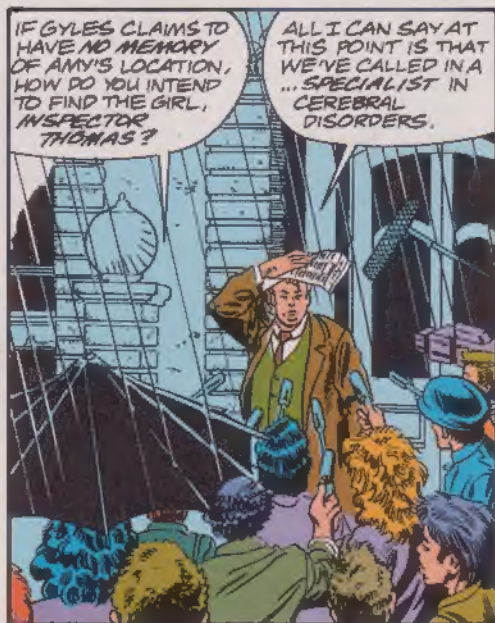
... ENGLAND'S OWN CAPTAIN
BRITAIN AND MEGGAN
SCAN THE CITY'S ROOFTOPS.

BRIAN? YOU
HAVEN'T SPOKEN
A WORD IN HALF
AN HOUR.

ARE YOU STILL ANGRY
THAT INSPECTOR
THOMAS DIDN'T LET
YOU "QUESTION" THE
SUSPECT?

OR ARE YOU
UPSET THAT I
VOLUNTEERED US
FOR THIS AERIAL
SEARCH?

WE'RE ALL
WORRIED. WHY
WOULDN'T YOU TALK
TO ME?



ISN'T THIS A PRETTY PICTURE?!
"LOVE IN THE PRECINCT
HOUSE!" ARE YOU HERE TO HELP,
SUMMERS, OR TO SEDUCE MY
MEN?!

FINE,
THANKS, AND
YOU?

SAVE YOUR
SMARTY-
MOUTHED
COMEBACKS FOR
YOUR TIGHT-
PANTED SUPER-
VILLAINS!

I NEED YOU TO DO THAT COSMIC BIRD
THING AND SIFT THROUGH THE MIND
OF THE SUSPECT IN--

WHOA,
SILVER.

IF YOU THINK
I'M GOING TO
PRY OPEN
SOMEONE'S
MIND AND TO
BLAZES WITH
HIS CIVIL
RIGHTS--

JUST WHAT I NEED...
A POLITICALLY
CORRECT SUPER
HERO!

LET ME
REPHRASE
THAT.

INCREDIBLE! SHE GES-
TURED, AND THE RAIN
WATER IS BEING "PULLED"
RIGHT OFF HIM!

I CAME DOWN TO THE
STATION OUT OF RESPECT
FOR BRIAN. IN HIS OWN
WAY, HE THINKS HIGHLY
OF YOU!

ME? I THINK YOU'RE AN
ARCHAIC, REACTIONARY PIG WITH
A MAD ON AGAINST HEROES.

NOW IF
THAT'S ALL,
I'LL BE
GOING.

THAT'S JUST
LIKE YOU
"SUPER
HEROES..."

...YOU HAVE
ALL THE
TIME IN THE
WORLD TO
SAVE THE
UNIVERSE--

--BUT YOU THINK NOTHING
OF TURNING YOUR BACK ON
THE LITTLE PEOPLE.

Where's
Amy
SUSPECT
IN
CUSTODY.

AS SOMETHING OF AN ORPHAN,
I THOUGHT YOU'D KNOW WHAT
IT'S LIKE TO BE ALONE AND
AFRAID.

CHEAP
SHOT.

I'M FULL
OF THEM.

WANT TO
HEAR
ANOTHER,
OR CAN
WE GET
STARTED?

LET'S
JUST GO
FIND THE
GIRL.





I'M IN. NOW LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN SEE.

GYLES
GETTING
READY
FOR A
"DATE."

OUTSIDE THE
SCHOOLYARD.
ANY IN SIGHT...

STR--
STRUGGLE.

SOME
KIND
OF...

...INTERFERENCE?

TAKING HER--
SOMEWHERE?

THINGS ARE
GETTING VERY...
VAGUE.

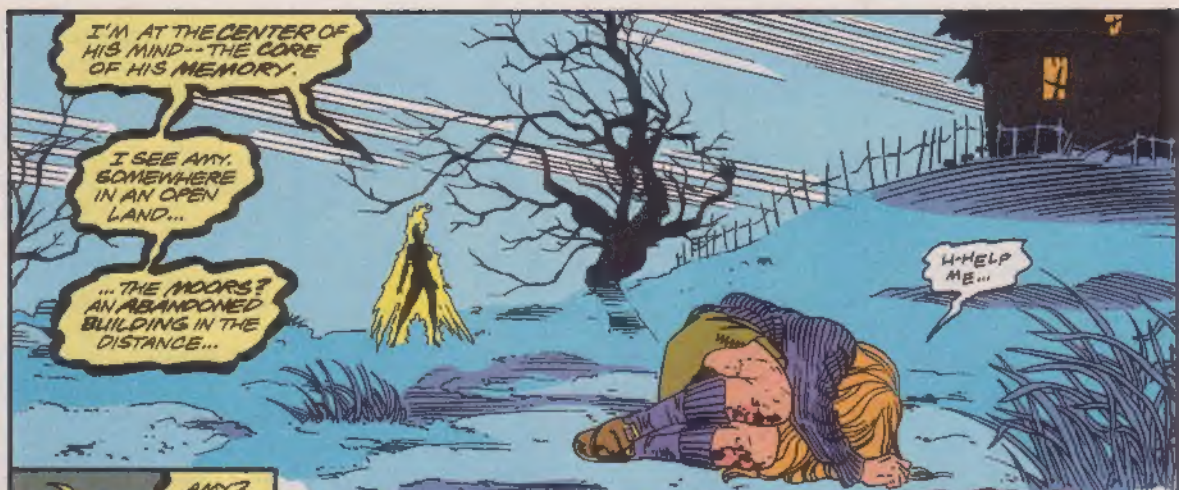
SOME THING... SOME
OUTSIDE FORCE IS
IN HERE WITH US.

SOMETHING
THAT DOESN'T
WANT THE
GIRL TO BE
FOUND.

I CAN SEE
SHE'S...
TRAPPED.

SOMEWHERE...
DARK.

I'M GOING IN
DEEPER...



I'M AT THE CENTER OF HIS MIND--THE CORE OF HIS MEMORY.

I SEE AMY, SOMEWHERE IN AN OPEN LAND...

...THE MOORS? AN ABANDONED BUILDING IN THE DISTANCE...

WHELP ME...



AMY?



IT'S OKAY.



YOU'RE SAFE NOW.



EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE--



?



SURPRISE!

WHA--?/ WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING INSIDE GYLES' MIND?!



I COULD ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION!

TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH AMY! WHERE DID GYLES LEAVE HER?

NO WAY, RED! I HATE HAPPY ENDINGS! I FIND THEM... DEPRESSING.

WHAT IS THAT? A... BOMB?!

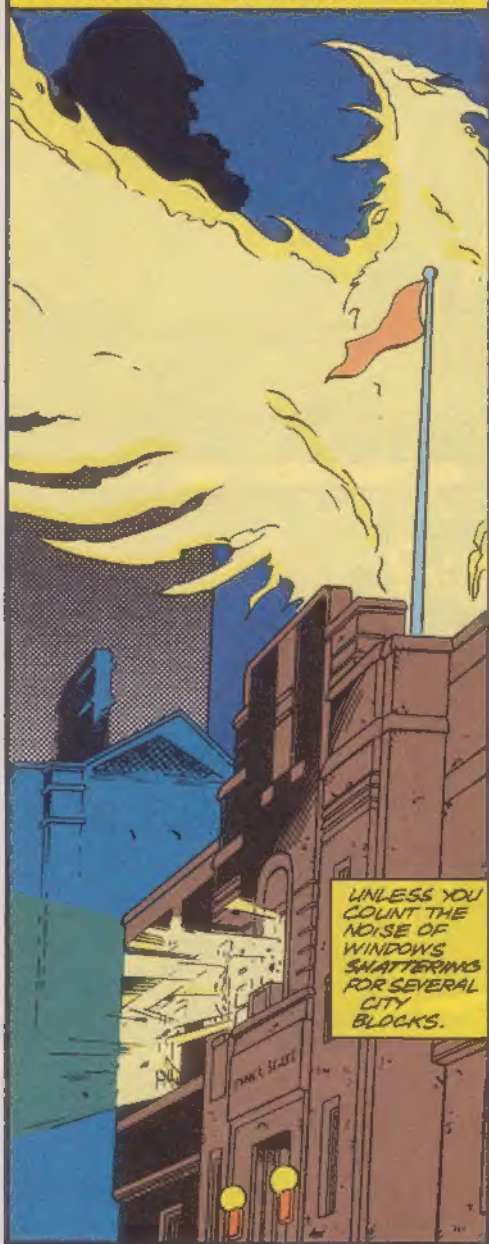
A PSYCHIC BOMB--TO BE EXACT.

BEFORE I DETONATE IT, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW.

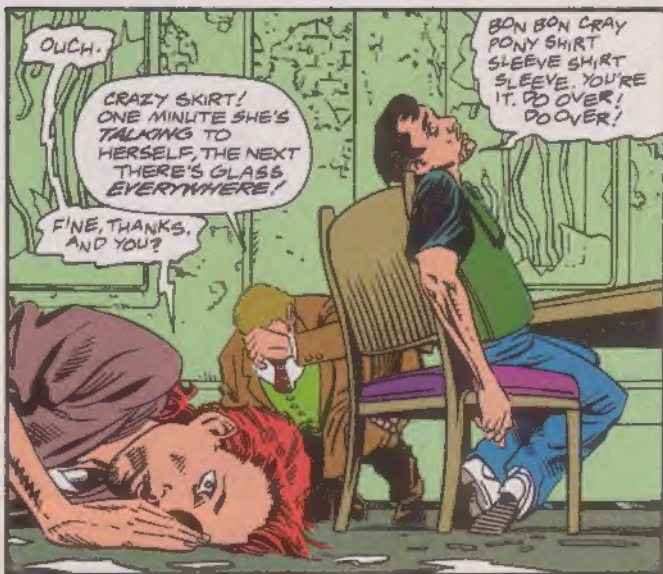
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FIND THE GIRL IN TIME.

AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT!

IT IS AN EXPLOSION WITHOUT SOUND.



UNLESS YOU COUNT THE NOISE OF WINDOWS SHATTERING FOR SEVERAL CITY BLOCKS.



OUCH.

CRAZY SKIRT! ONE MINUTE SHE'S TALKING TO HERSELF, THE NEXT THERE'S GLASS EVERYWHERE!

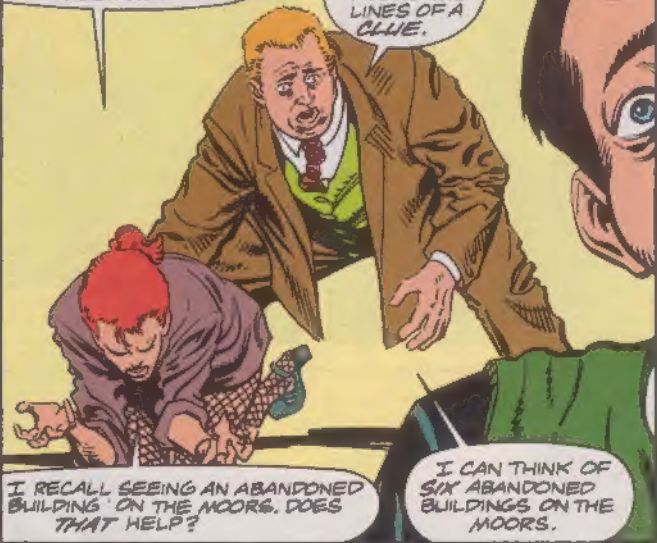
FINE, THANKS, AND YOU?

BON BON CRAY PONY SHIRT SLEEVE SHIRT. YOU'RE IT. DO OVER! DO OVER!

DID YOU GET ANYTHING, ANYTHING AT ALL?

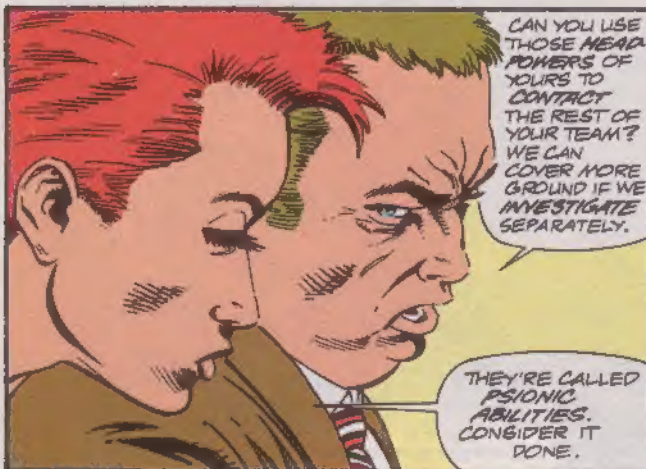
BARELY. SOMETHING HAS TAKEN OVER HIS MIND. I PICKED UP SOME OTHER. DIMENSIONAL PSYCHIC RESIDUE.

I WAS THINKING ALONG THE LINES OF A CLUE.



I RECALL SEEING AN ABANDONED BUILDING ON THE MOORS. DOES THAT HELP?

I CAN THINK OF SIX ABANDONED BUILDINGS ON THE MOORS.



CAN YOU USE THOSE HEAD POWERS OF YOURS TO CONTACT THE REST OF YOUR TEAM? WE CAN COVER MORE GROUND IF WE INVESTIGATE SEPARATELY.

THEY'RE CALLED PSIONIC ABILITIES. CONSIDER IT DONE.



DAI?! WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SUSPECT?

HE'LL BE FINE.

ER...HE'LL BE FINE.

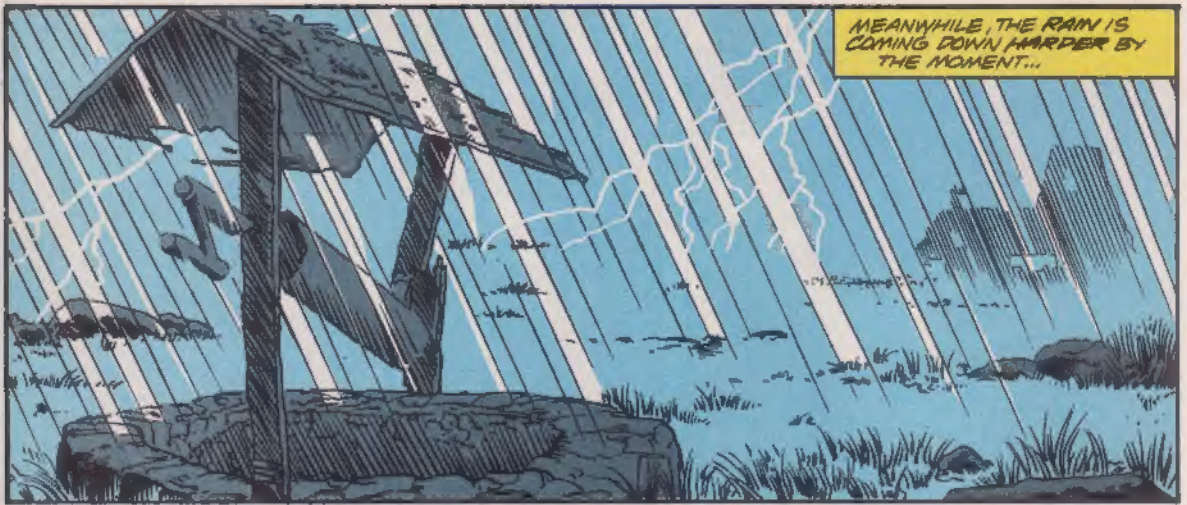
REALLY?

REALLY.

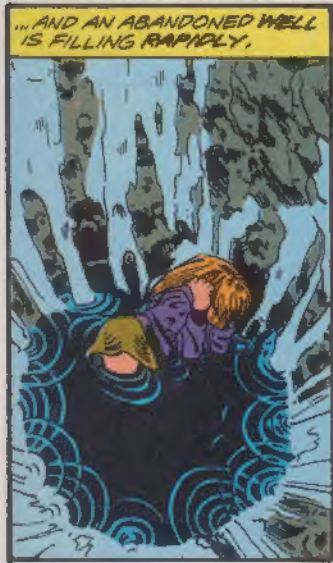
WHEN? HE LOOKS TERRIBLE!

HHMM? A WEEK OR TWO.

SOON.



MEANWHILE, THE RAIN IS COMING DOWN HARDER BY THE MOMENT...



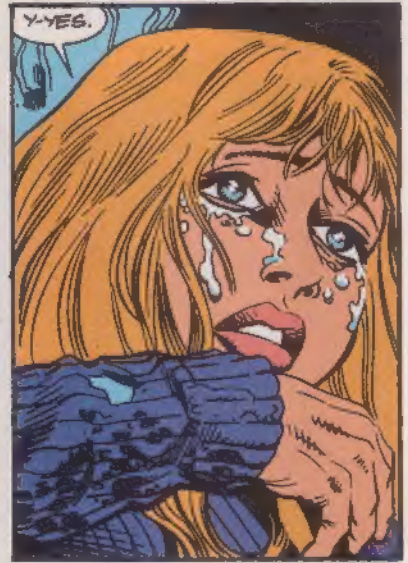
... AND AN ABANDONED WELL IS FILLING RAPIDLY.



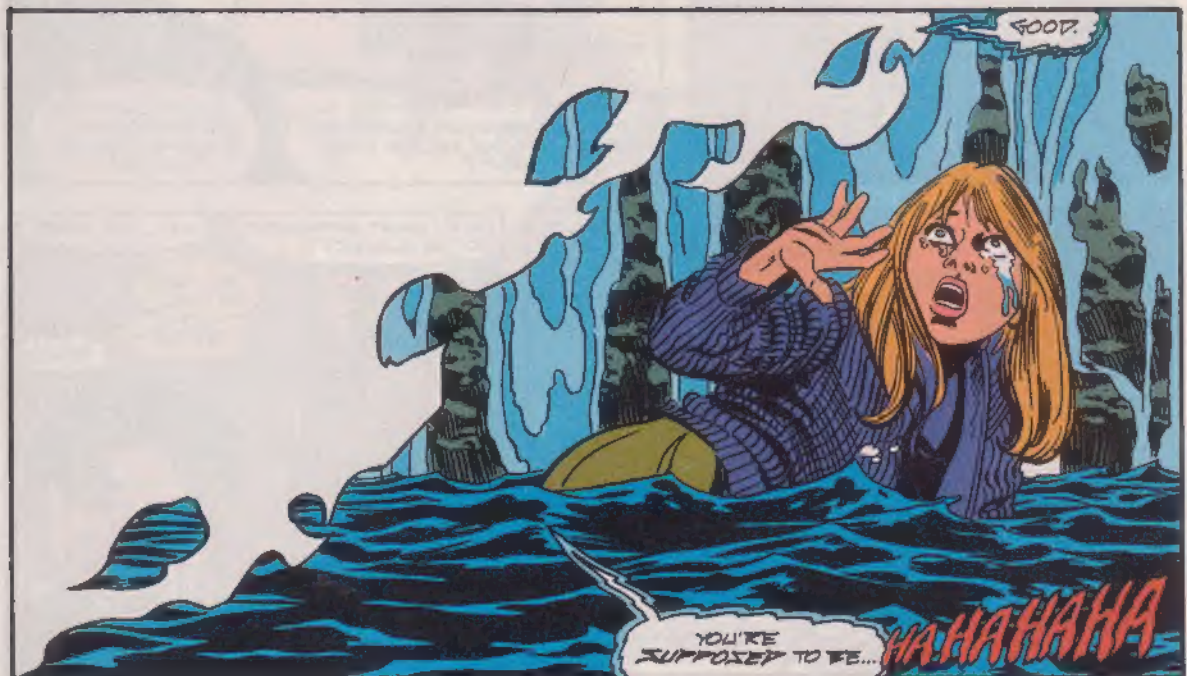
HELLO, LITTLE AMY.

HAHA--?!

ARE YOU FRIGHTENED?



Y-YES.



GOOD.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE...

HAHAHAHA



LATER...

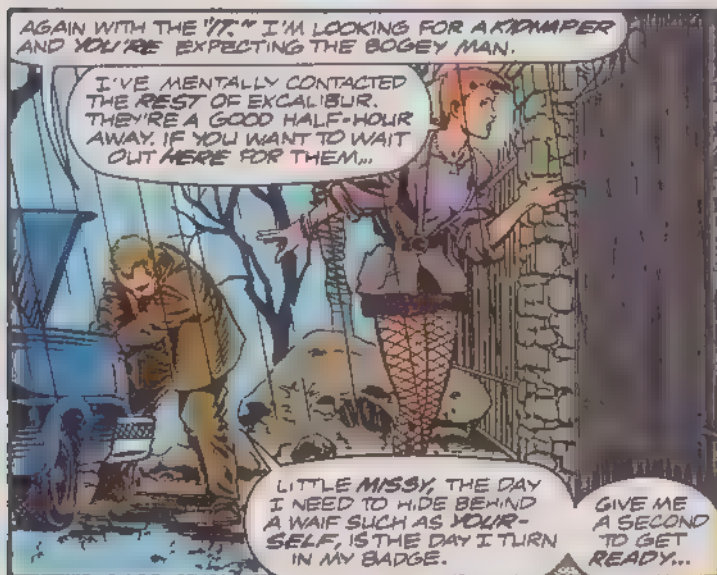
THIS MUST BE THE PLACE

WHY DO I GET THE
FEELING YOU'VE WAITED
YOUR WHOLE LIFE TO
SAY THAT?

BECAUSE
I HAVE.

I WONDER WHAT THE
ODDS ARE THAT YOU AND
I LUCKED OUT AND
MANAGED TO FIND HER
RIGHT OFF?

HE..IT'S
HERE..I CAN
FEEL IT.



AGAIN WITH THE 'IT.' I'M LOOKING FOR A KIDNAPER
AND YOU'RE EXPECTING THE BOGEY MAN.

I'VE MENTALLY CONTACTED
THE REST OF EXCALIBUR.
THEY'RE A GOOD HALF-HOUR
AWAY. IF YOU WANT TO WAIT
OUT HERE FOR THEM...

LITTLE MISSY, THE DAY
I NEED TO HIDE BEHIND
A WAIF SUCH AS YOUR-
SELF, IS THE DAY I TURN
IN MY BADGE.

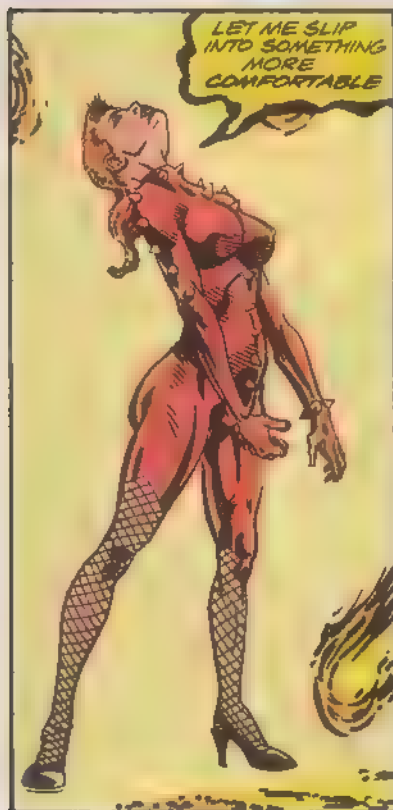
GIVE ME
A SECOND
TO GET
READY...



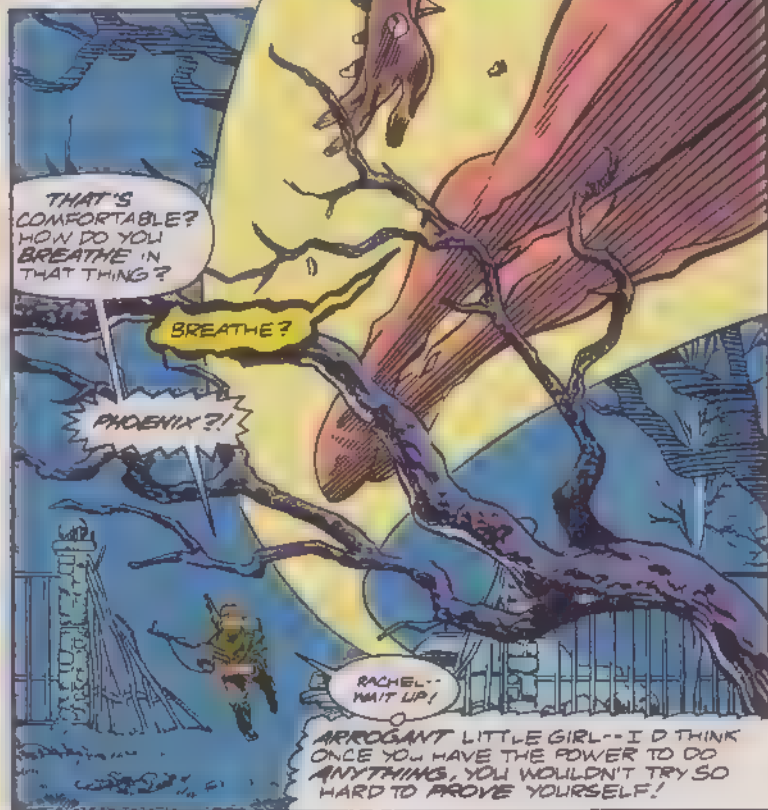
THERE.

YOU'RE EXPECTING
THE RUSSIAN
ARMY?

AT LEAST I'M NOT
DRESSED LIKE I'M
HOPING TO BE PICKED
UP IN PICCADILLY
CIRCUS!



LET ME SLIP
INTO SOMETHING
MORE
COMFORTABLE



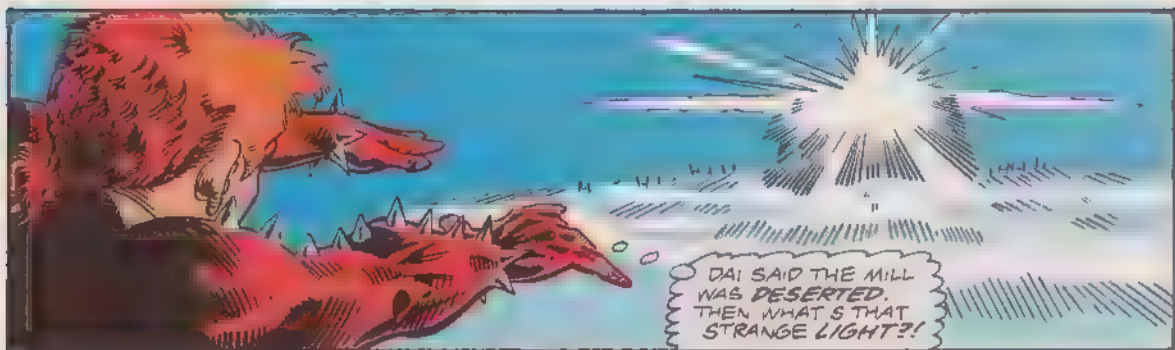
THAT'S
COMFORTABLE?
HOW DO YOU
BREATHE IN
THAT THING?

BREATHE?

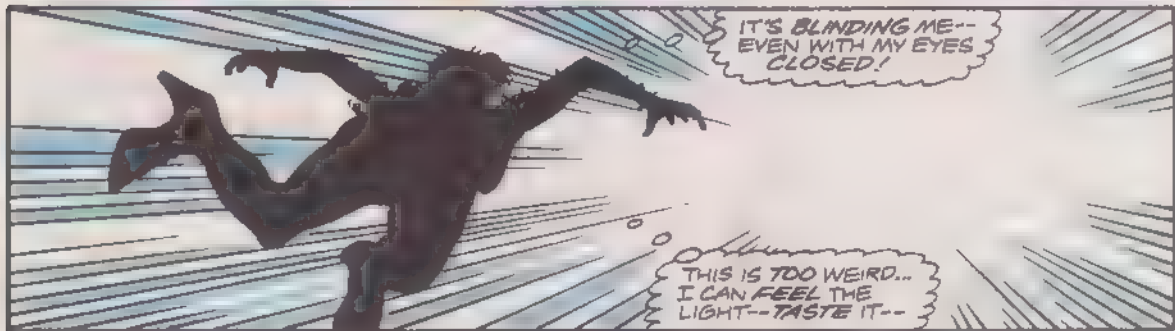
PHOENIX?!

RACHEL--
WAIT UP!

ARROGANT LITTLE GIRL-- I DO THINK
ONCE YOU HAVE THE POWER TO DO
ANYTHING, YOU WOULDN'T TRY SO
HARD TO PROVE YOURSELF!



DAI SAID THE MILL
WAS DESERTED.
THEN WHAT'S THAT
STRANGE LIGHT?!



IT'S BLINDING ME--
EVEN WITH MY EYES
CLOSED!

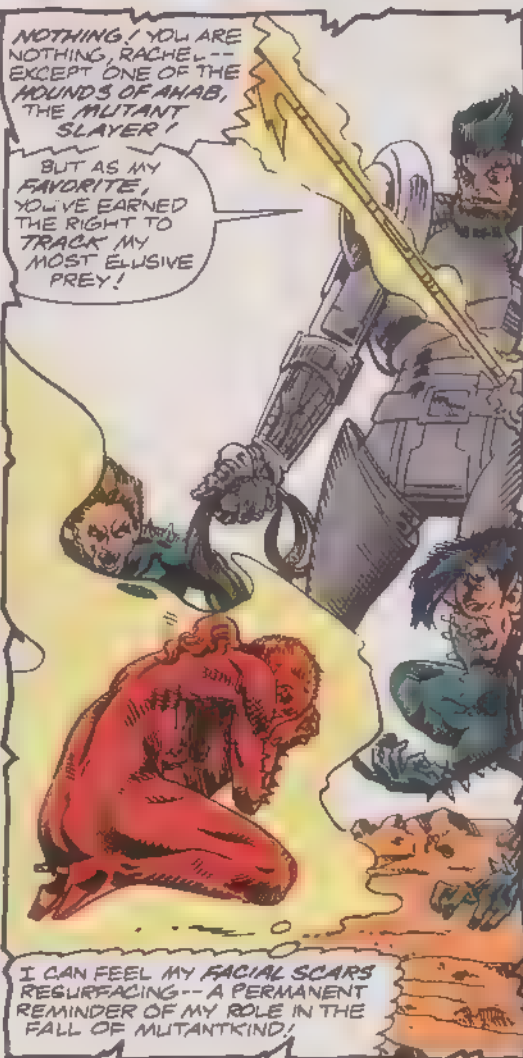
THIS IS TOO WEIRD...
I CAN FEEL THE
LIGHT--TASTE IT--



--AS IF IT'S IN MY
VERY MIND! BUT
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

I'M PHOENIX!

I AM--



NOTHING! YOU ARE
NOTHING, RACHEL---
EXCEPT ONE OF THE
HOUNDS OF AHAH,
THE MUTANT
SLAYER!

BUT AS MY
FAVORITE,
YOU'VE EARNED
THE RIGHT TO
TRACK MY
MOST ELUSIVE
PREY!

I CAN FEEL MY FACIAL SCARS
RESURFACING-- A PERMANENT
REMINDER OF MY ROLE IN THE
FALL OF MUTANTKIND!



YES, MASTER--
I LIVE TO SERVE.

NO! WHAT
AM I
DOING!?

HOW CAN
THIS BE
HAPPENING?
I'M RE-
LIVING MY
PAST--
EARTH'S
POSSIBLE
FUTURE--
AND I'M
POWER-
LESS TO
STOP
MYSELF!

AS INTRODUCED
AS I WAS THE
FIRST TIME!

THIS IS THE ALTERNATE
FUTURE I CAME FROM,
WHERE MUTANTS WERE
TRACKED DOWN AND
KILLED BY THE
UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT.*

I REMEMBER
THIS PLACE--
UNITED
GERMANY, THE
NIGHT I
TRACKED...
PLEASE, NO...

* AS INTRODUCED IN
X-MEN #141-142 --TK

NIGHTCRAWLER!

THAT IS A
NAME I
HAVEN'T
HEARD IN
YEARS,
CHILD.

I AM NOW
CALLED
FATHER
WAGNER.

WHEN HE SURVIVED THE
MASSACRE AT THE
MANSION, KURT FLED TO
EUROPE AND JOINED
THE PRIESTHOOD.

AS A
MUTANT
RIGHTS
ACTIVIST,
YOU'RE A
CONSTANT
OBSTACLE TO
THE HIER-
ARCHY

YOUR TYRANNICAL GOVERN-
MENT HAS NO AUTHORITY
HERE. CHILD. GERMANY
STANDS AS THE VAN-
GUARD FOR MUTANT
FREEDOM.

GREAT JUST WHAT
I NEED... A GODDESS
WANNA-BE GONE
ROUND THE BEND!

MY MASTER BELIEVES
THAT AS THE
BELOVED
FATHER
WAGNER
FALLS--

SHE'S PLAYING
OUT SOME
FANTASY IN
HER MIND... AND
SHE DOESN'T
LOOK HAPPY!

--SO WILL THE
PITIFUL
EUROPEAN
MUTANT
COLLECTIVE!

FORGIVE HER, FATHER--
SHE KNOWS NOT WHAT
SHE DOES.

NO! PLEASE,
FUZZY! DON'T
BE DEAD I
COULDN'T
HAVE KILLED
YOU!

AHAB IS
GOING TO BE
ANGRY IF HE
IS DEAD

I KNOW WHAT
HAPPENS NEXT,
BUT I CAN'T
HELP MYSELF!

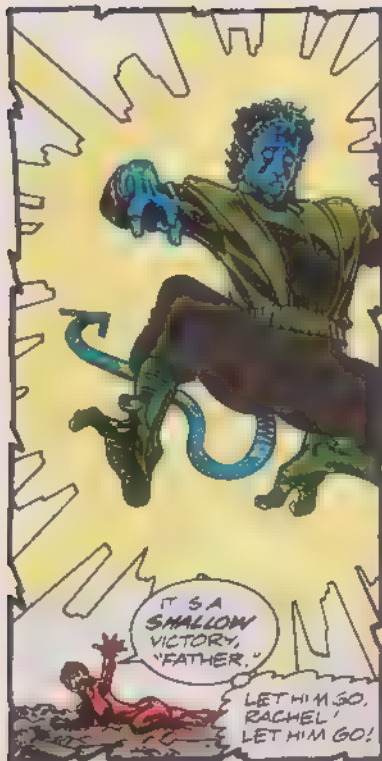
THE
STENCH
OF BRIM-
STONE!
HE MUST
HAVE
TELE-
PORTED--

BEHIND
YOU.

WHILE I ABHOR
VIOLENCE, IT WAS
NECESSARY TO
ALLOW PIETRO
TIME TO AWAY
WITH THE
ORPHANED
MUTANTS.

ANY
SACRIFICE
IS WORTH
KNOWING
THEY'RE SAFE
FROM YOUR
MASTER'S
WRATH.

BUT YOU'RE NOT,
FUZZY! AND I HAVE
TO LIVE THE REST
OF MY LIFE KNOWING
I WAS-- WILL BE--
RESPONSIBLE FOR
YOUR DEATH

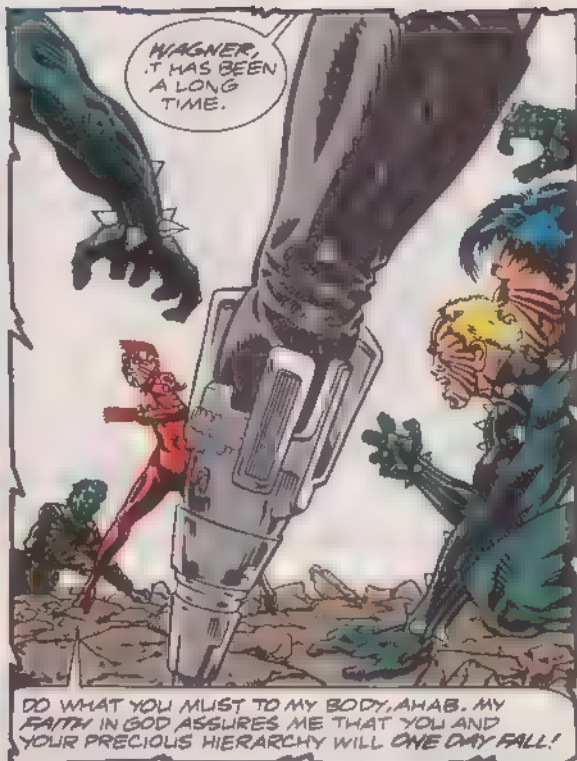


IT'S A
SHALLOW
VICTORY,
"FATHER."

LET HIM GO,
RACHEL!
LET HIM GO!

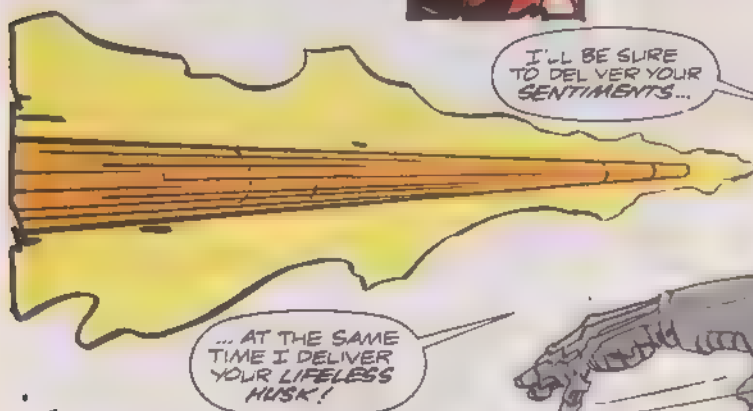


GOOD
WORK, MY
SWEET



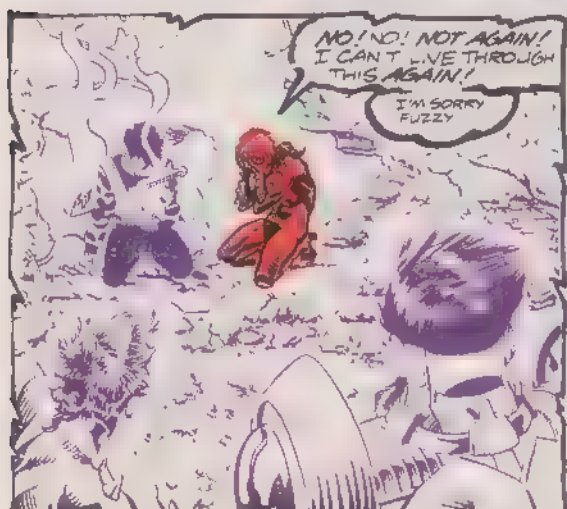
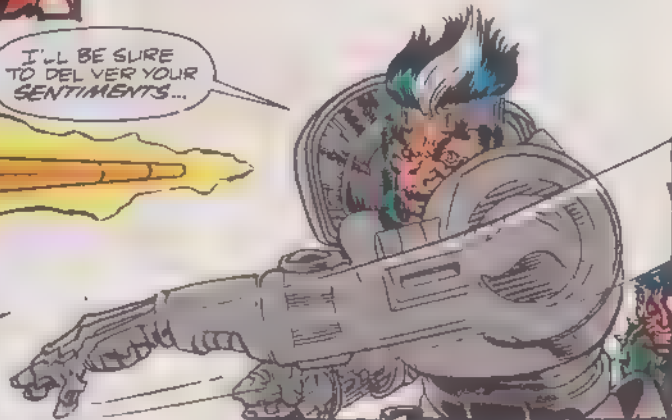
WAGNER,
IT HAS BEEN
A LONG
TIME.

DO WHAT YOU MUST TO MY BODY, AHAB. MY
FAITH IN GOD ASSURES ME THAT YOU AND
YOUR PRECIOUS HIERARCHY WILL ONE DAY FALL!



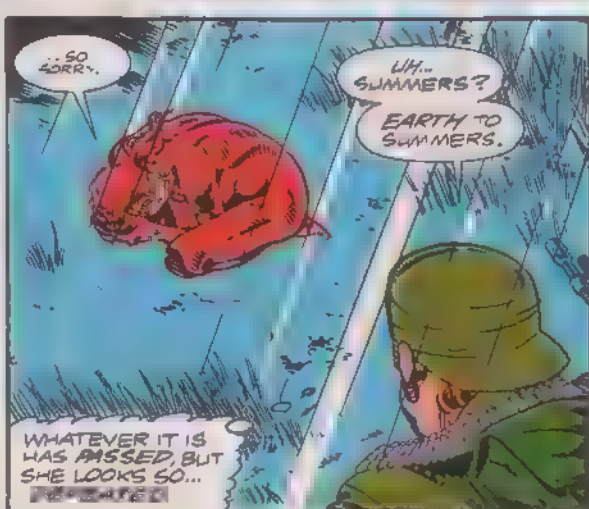
I'LL BE SURE
TO DELIVER YOUR
SENTIMENTS...

... AT THE SAME
TIME I DELIVER
YOUR LIFELESS
HUSK!



NO! NO! NOT AGAIN!
I CAN'T LIVE THROUGH
THIS AGAIN!

I'M SORRY
FUZZY



... SO
SAD.

UH...
SUMMERS?
EARTH TO
SUMMERS.

WHATEVER IT IS
WAS MISSED, BUT
SHE LOOKS SO...
PERFECT

"DEFEATED?"
WHAT A SPLENDIDLY
HUMAN CONCEPT!

ON THE CONTRARY--THE
BOGEYMAN IS A CREATURE
OF FANTASY. UNLIKE THE
ILLUSIONS I PLACED IN
YOUNG RACHEL'S MIND,
I AM QUITE REAL!

I AM...

DISFAVOR!

AND I'M HOPE
AND SHE'S CROSBY.
WHERE'S THE
GIRL?!

I WOULD CONCENTRATE
ON DEFEATING ME IF I
WERE YOU--

--EVEN IF IT IS
IMPOSSIBLE!

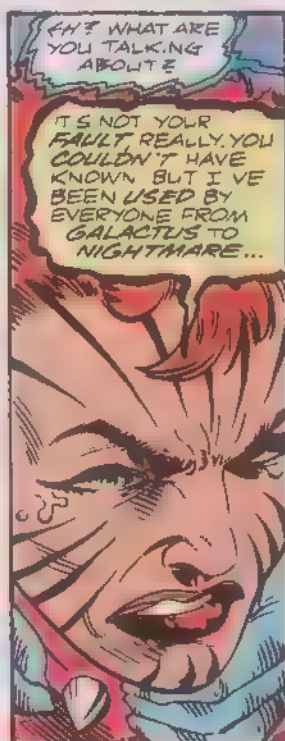
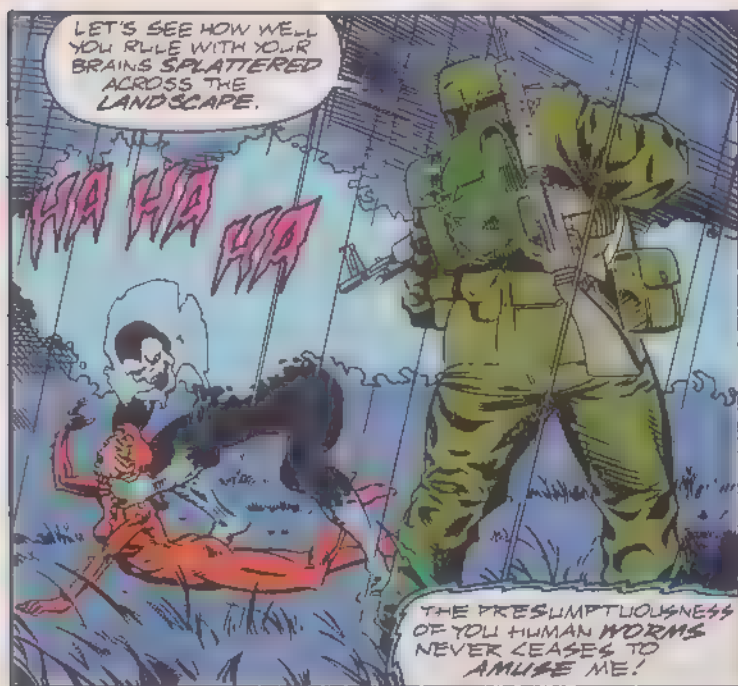
YOU SEE, I ENGINEERED
THE YOUNG GIRL'S DILEMMA
SO THAT I COULD SIPHON
OFF THE DESPAIR AND
HOPELESSNESS OF THE
MASSES.

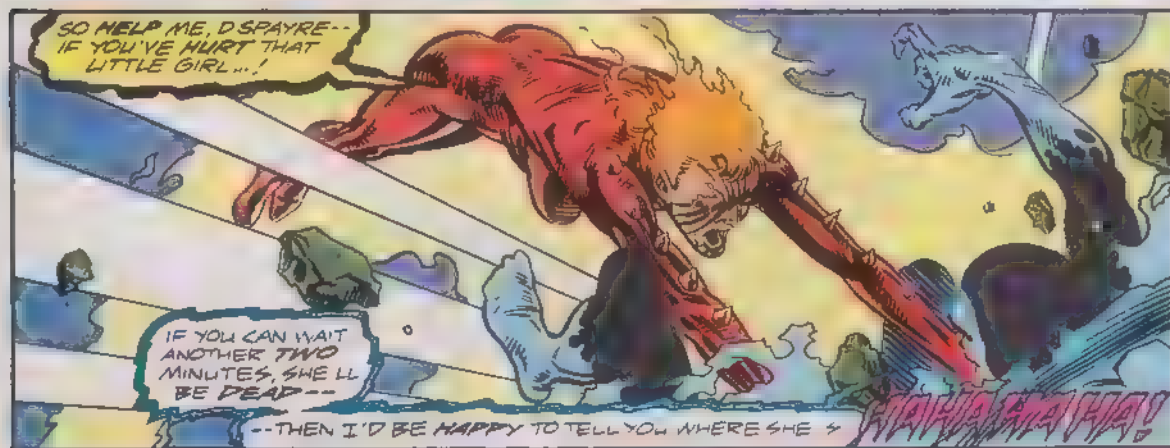
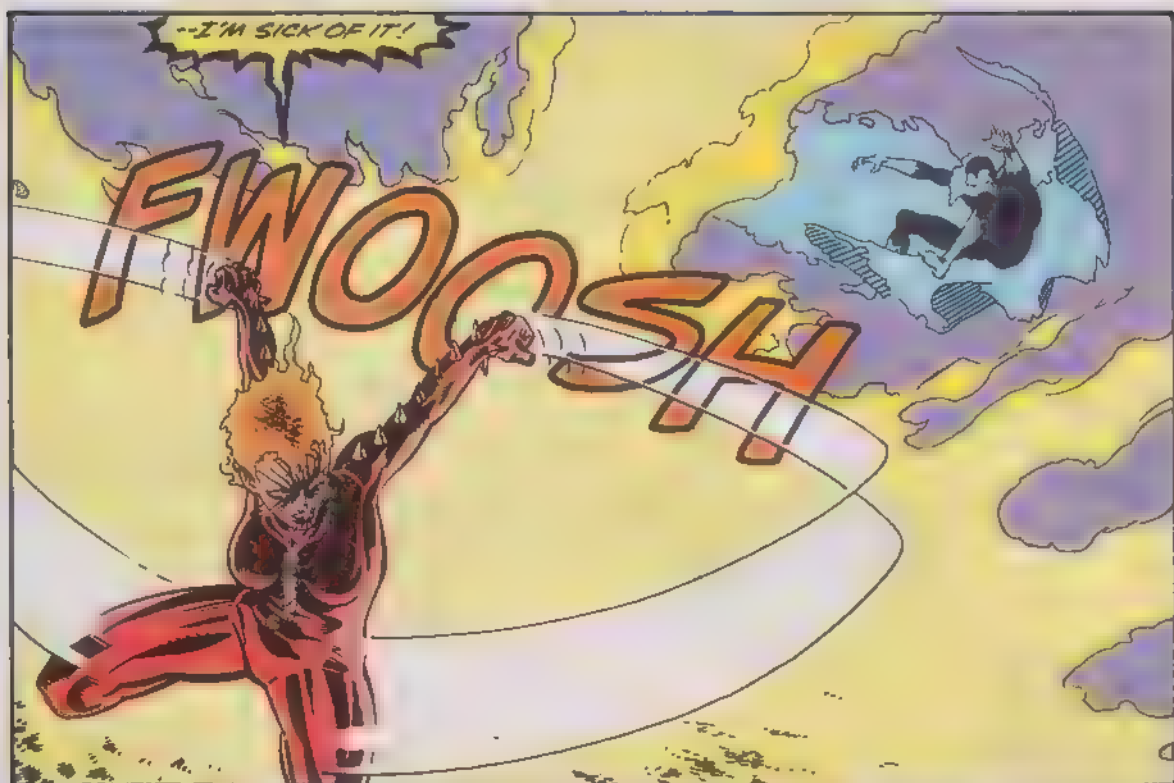
I GUESS I OWE
SLIMMERS AN
APOLOGY. TURNS OUT
IT WAS THE BOGEY
MAN ALL ALONG!

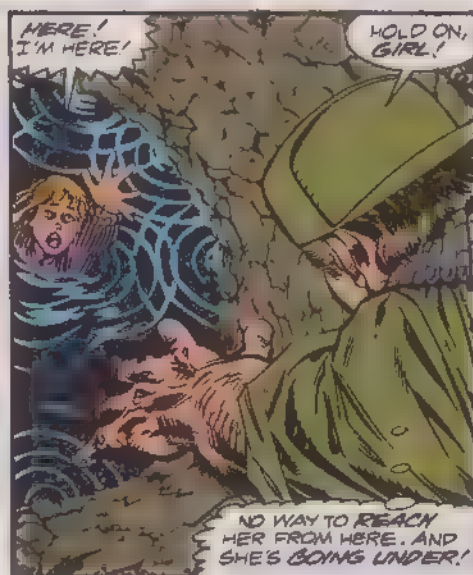
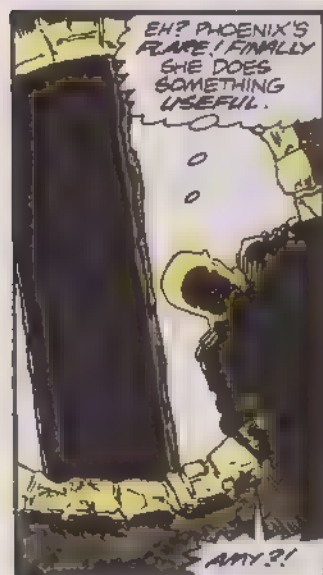
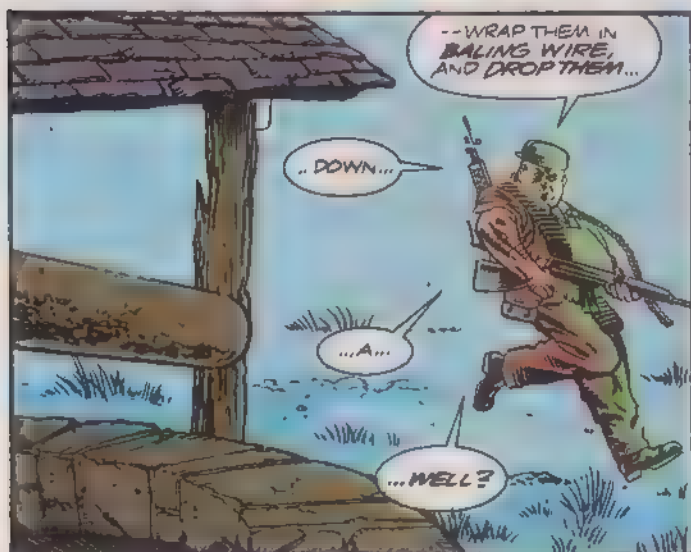
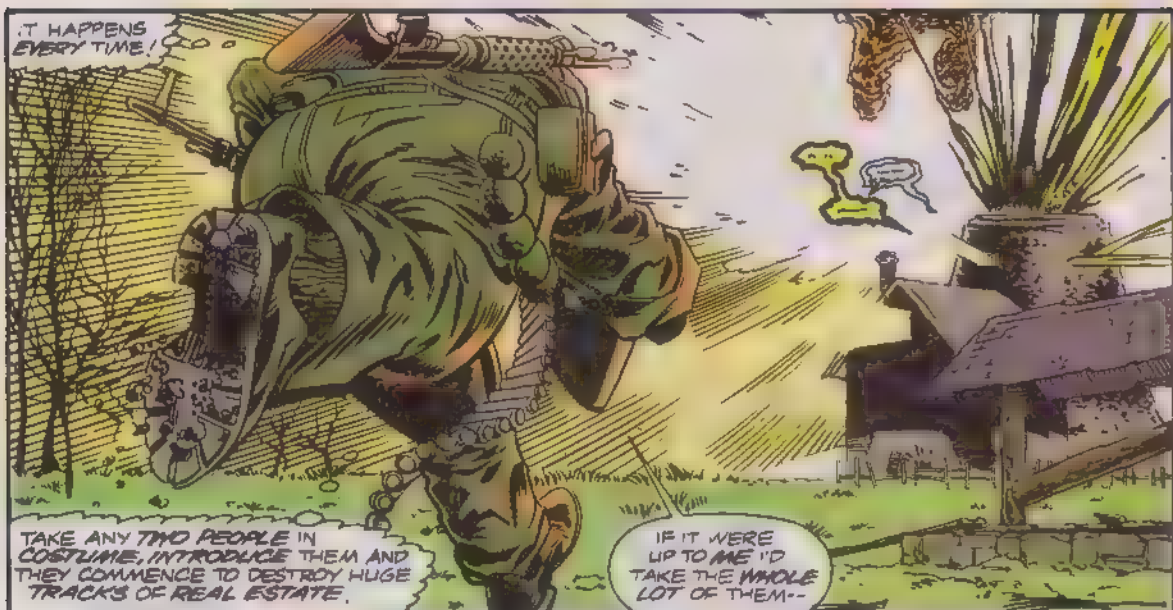
THEN WHO
SHOULD DROP
INTO MY LAP BUT
THE PHOENIX?!

ALL I HAD TO
DO WAS TRIG-
GER MEMORIES
OF RACHEL'S
SORDID PAST...

...AND I HAVE ENOUGH
COSMIC ANGST ON HAND
TO EXPAND MY REIGN
OF TERROR OVER YET
ANOTHER DIMENSION!







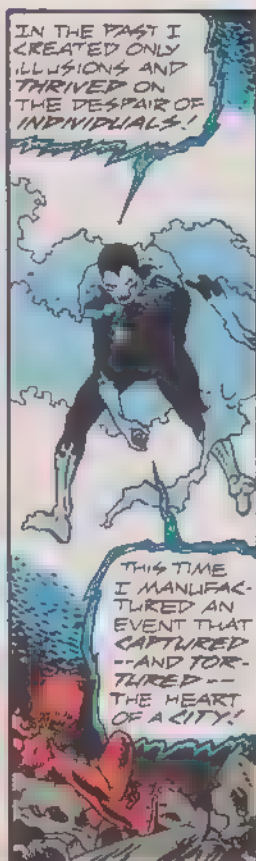


HE'S GETTING...
STRONGER?

MUCH STRONGER! YOU
SEE--THE MORE I BEAT
YOU, THE MORE DE-
PRESSED YOU BECOME...

THE MORE
DEPRESSED YOU
BECOME, THE
MORE I--

I GET
THE
POINT.



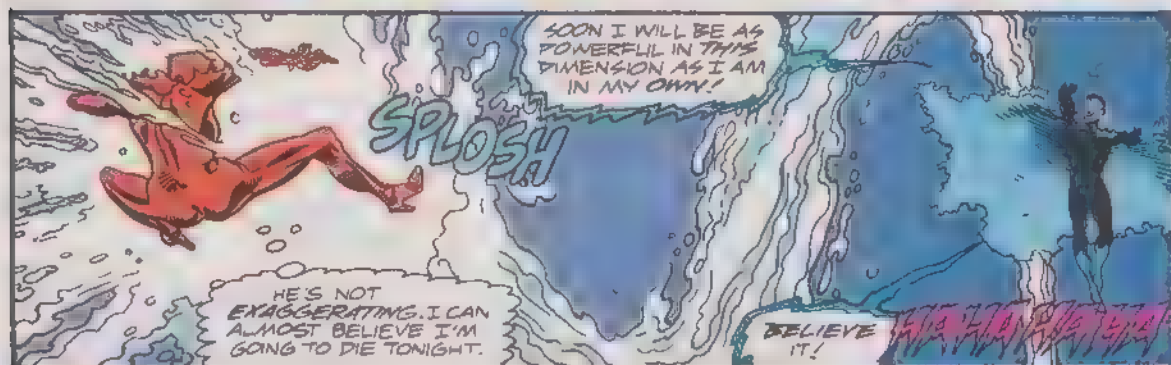
IN THE PAST I
CREATED ONLY
ILLUSIONS AND
THRIVED ON
THE DESPAIR OF
INDIVIDUALS!

THIS TIME
I MANUFACTURED
AN EVENT THAT
CAPTURED
--AND TORTURED--
THE HEART
OF A CITY!



WITH THE
DEATH OF
THE GIRL,
ALL OF
LONDON
WILL GRIEVE!

AND
I WILL
FEAST!

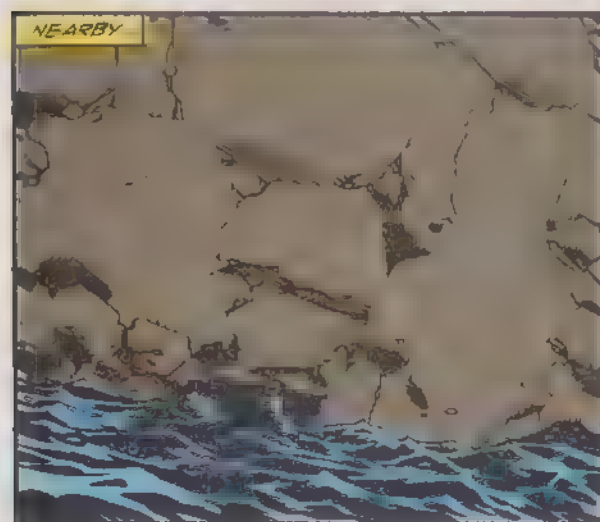


SOON I WILL BE AS
POWERFUL IN THIS
DIMENSION AS I AM
IN MY OWN!

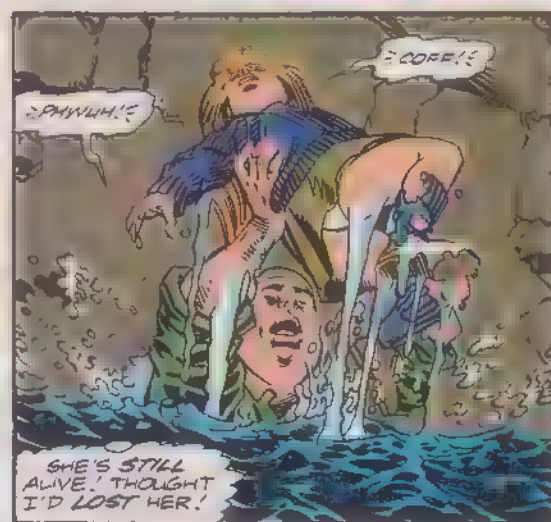
SPLOSH

HE'S NOT
EXAGGERATING. I CAN
ALMOST BELIEVE I'M
GOING TO DIE TONIGHT.

BELIEVE
IT!



NEARBY



PHWUM!

COFFEE

SHE'S STILL
ALIVE. I THOUGHT
I'D LOST HER!

BULLPEN BULLETINS

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes! Even though Christmas is behind us, big-hearted Marvel still has plenty of goodies in store for you! And here's where your old faithful Soapbox Santa clues you in to two new titles going on sale right now!

You've seen the ads! You've heard the name uttered in whispers! But now it's time to meet the newest, most exotically exciting superstar in the mighty Marvel firmament—the only super hero based on a real-life, flesh-and-blood human being—dazzling, dangerous, deadly—a smoldering sizzling stick of human dynamite—the one and only NIGHT CAT!

Of course, the cat's manager, Dapper Don Kessler, and I have a somewhat selfish motive for pushing Night Cat's first issue since sneaky artist Denys Cowan actually drew us in as part of the story. Yours truly wrote the script, too, which could possibly change the complexion of the comic book industry for all time to

come! But don't let that discourage you—you can always just look at the pictures!

But hey, that's only half the excitement! Our who-e blushing! Bulpen is turned on to



Troma Films' wild and wacky world-famous movie idol, TOXIC AVENGER, the super hero who makes Spider-Man seem like a well-adjusted average guy! In fact, we did it so much that we made a deal with Lovable Lloyd Kaufman and the Magnanimous Michael Herz, The big-time movie producers who so unselfishly unleashed di'Toxie on a defenseless public, a deal to publish his sensationally screwy adventures in our manvaca style!

Be forewarned! Toxie is not your usual hero! In fact, he's not your usual anything. But this you can count on—NIGHT CAT and THE TOXIC AVENGER may turn out to be the most unexpected hits of '91, and, thanks to my legendary generosity, you're the first to hear of them!

Now, till next ish, wherever you go, whatever you do, think Marvel! (Instead of uttering your mind with non-essentials!) Excessive!

Stan

I was a rainy day in New York. The kind of day when you could get wet just by walking outside. The man on the corner was selling umbrellas for five dollars each. I could usually talk him down to three. When I got home, I would throw it on the pile with the 300 other umbrellas I've managed to leave at home every time it rains. It seems to rain a lot in New York. Perhaps it's God's way of trying to give the city an acid bath. Perhaps not. That's not for me to say. Me, I'm just another private eye. They call me Dodge Deadline. Comic Book Detective.

It was a slow day at the office. I was just about to seriously consider calling up that guy on TV who makes the pitch for Apex Technical School. Then he walked in—Tom DeFalco, head honcho over at Marvel Comics. He had a problem, and he needed my help. Last month's Bulpen Bulletin Page had disappeared before it had ever seen print. He wanted me to find it. I took the case. Tom took the six-pack.

I headed uptown to the offices of Marvel Comics. If I was going to learn anything about the missing Bulpen Page, this was the place to do it. My first stop was the office of PUNISHER editor Don Daley.

Don told me he was exhausted—he was still resting up from the New York Runners Club's Midnight Run. That's a run that's held every year, beginning at exactly twelve midnight on New Year's Day. Don also entered the New York Marathon last year for the first time. It seemed like he'd been doing a lot of running lately. Just what exactly was he running from, anyway? I listed Don as a suspect, and moved on.

I stopped by Ralph Macchio's office, and found Ralph's assistant, Mike Heisler, still missing after a mysterious three-month absence. Heisler allegedly is taking some time off to do some freelance lettering, something about owing a debt to his uncle. Funny, I didn't know Heisler's uncle was named "Sam." Another potential suspect.

I stopped in to see Jim Salicrup, but he was so deliriously happy, he couldn't even

talk to me. Dodge Deadline. It seemed one of Jim's freelancers, Fred Hembeck, recently had a baby with his lovely wife Lynn. The child was born on August 25th, and named Julie Elizabeth Moss Hembeck. That's a lot of names for a little kid. In his present state, there was no talking to Salicrup, so I made a mental note to track him down later.

I noticed my mental pen was getting low on mental ink, so I made another mental note to stop by a mental store later and pick up some more.

I headed over to see Craig Anderson, Marvel's resident vidiot. Craig gave me the lowdown on the new Silver Surfer home video game from Nintendo and the Spider-Man home game from Sega-Genesis. Craig added that the Spider-Man handheld game from Gameboy is also a big, big hit. Craig talked about a potential Spider-Man arcade game, but he seemed to be dodging the real issue. Did Craig know something about the missing Bulpen Page—something he wasn't telling me, Dodge Deadline?

Craig threw me a few names—Jim Starlin, George Perez. I caught them. He said they were working on a project which, just might blow the lid off this whole case. But Starlin and Perez were nowhere to be found. Apparently they'd gone into hiding to work on this hush-hush project. All I found about this mystery project was that I involved a dangerous customer by the name of Thanos, as well as almost everybody in the Marvel Universe. Clearly I was on to something big, but that wasn't the case I was working on. I'd have to come back to that some other day. I still hadn't found that Bulpen Page.

Assistant Editor Chris Cooper walked by me, Dodge Deadline, in the hall. I overheard him tell fellow assistant, Len Kaminsky, he's never been mentioned in the Bulpen Page before. Len said that made two of them. Hmm—that gives them both motives, but very filmy ones.

I started snooping around Bob Budiansky's office. But Bob wasn't talking. Neither was his assistant, Tom Brevoort.

A.J. I could get out of them was that they're doing a newsstand reprint of the four-issue DEATHLOK Limited Series, and working on the 1991 Marvel trading cards.

That was all well, and good, but it didn't solve my case. I paid a visit to Epic Editor Marcus McLaurin, who was happy as a clam about the fourth anniversary of the Comic Illustrators Guild at the Pratt School of Art and Design. It seems Marcus formed the club while in his senior year at the school to pave the way for future generations of artists to get away with drawing comics in class.

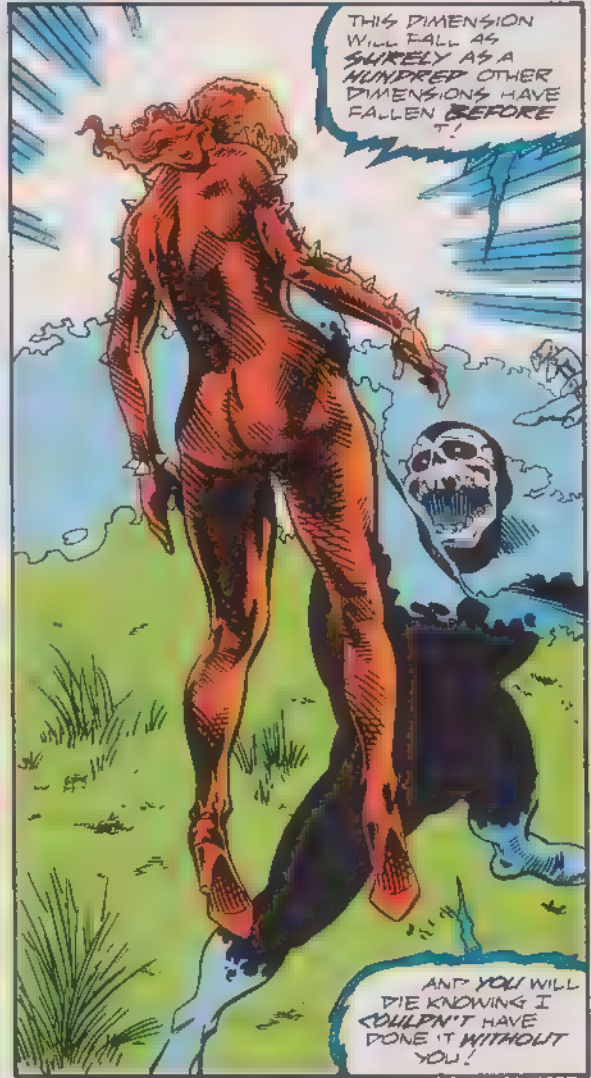
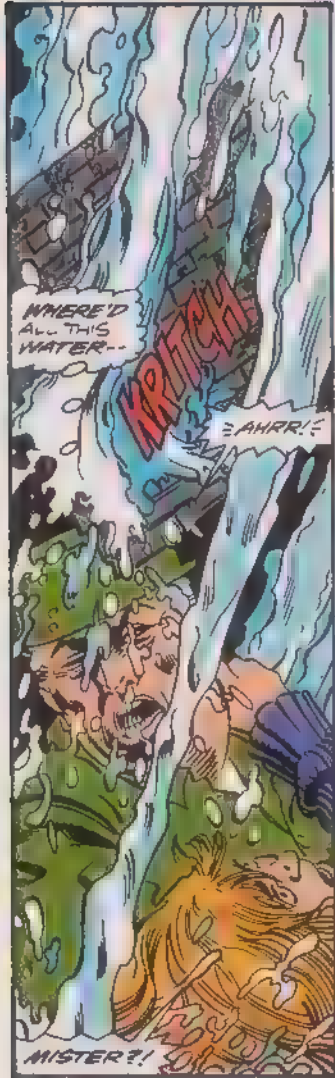
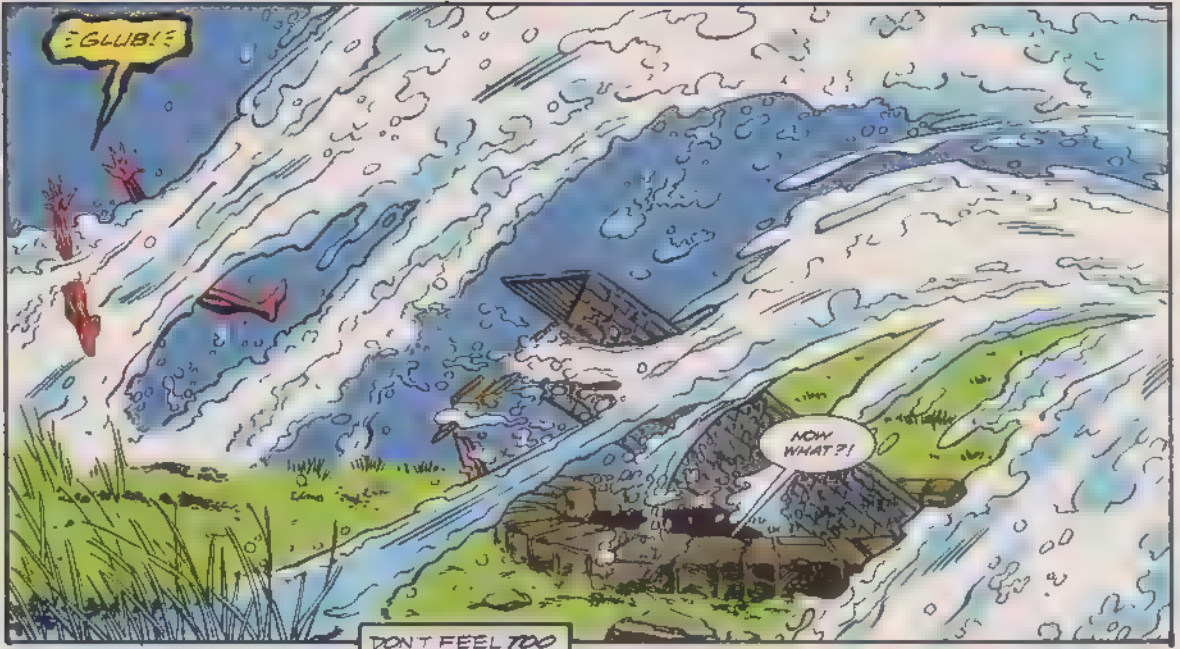
He's one sharp cucumber, that Marcus, but no Bulpen Page-napper. Next I noticed his assistant Marie Javins. Marie's wall is decorated with drawings of cows by some of the biggest names in comics. But Marie threatened to take down her Wall of Bountiful Bovines if she received no new submissions soon. Would Marie's wall come tumbling down? Unfortunately, I couldn't stick around to find out.

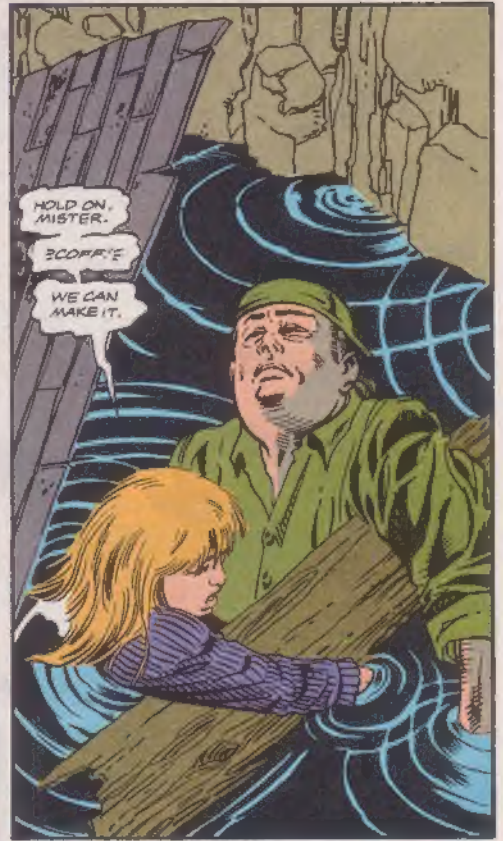
I could've pumped people at Marvel for answers all day, but I was cruising in the fast lane to nowhere. Everyone was a potential suspect. I decided I would switch tactics.

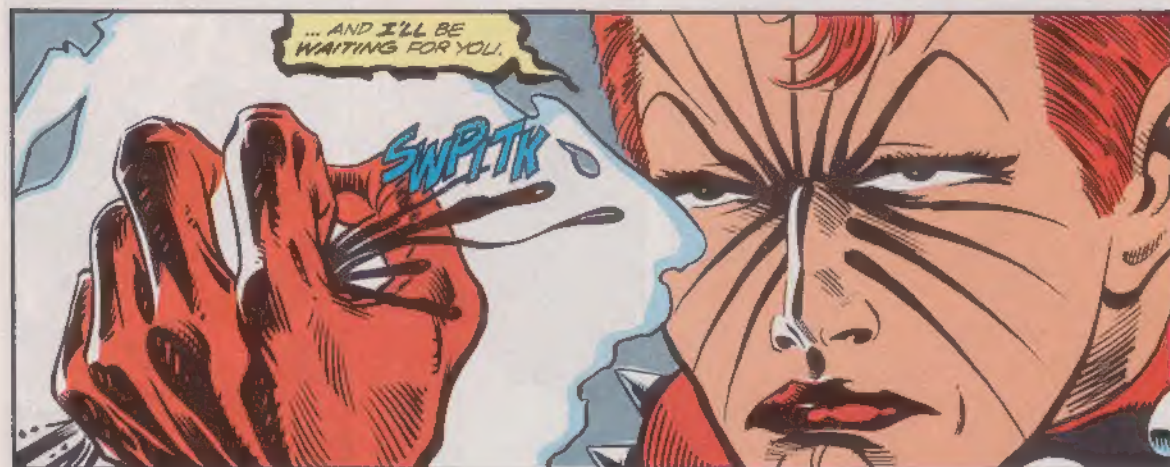
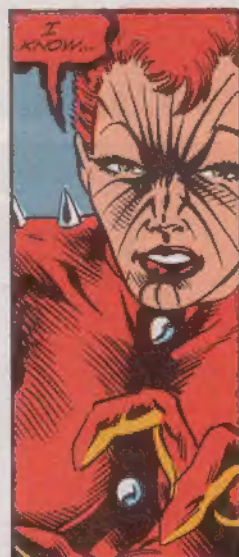
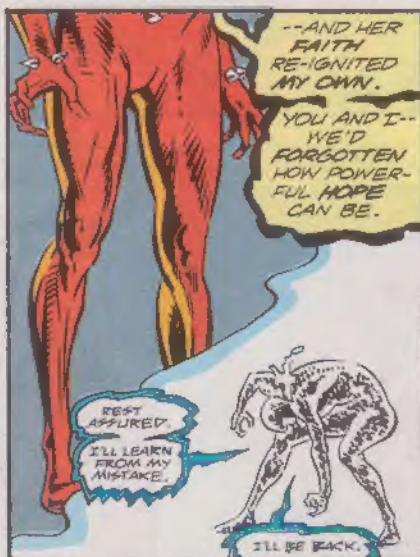
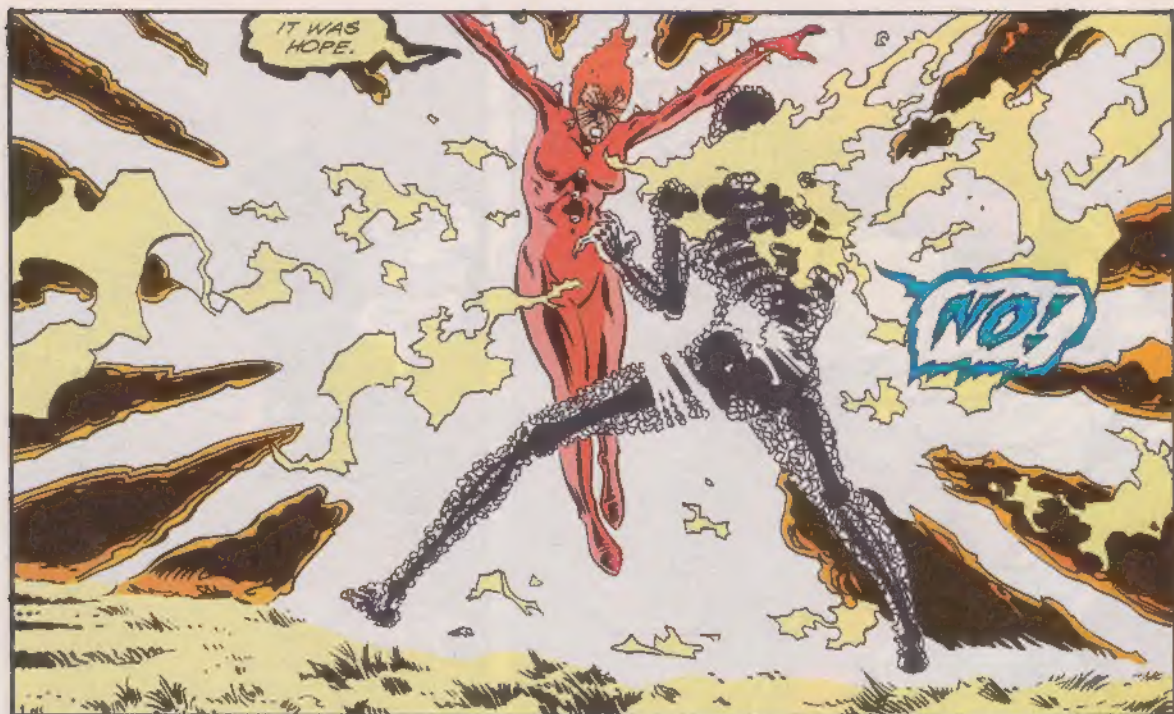
I charmed my way into Marvel's master computer file. If there was any trace left of the Bulpen Page, I knew I would find it here. I punched up the file, and there it was—the December Bulpen Page. It was just full of all kinds of incriminating evidence about the Marvel staff. If this thing ever saw print, it would destroy several careers, a couple marriages, and the noon trade at Slappy Sams Eat 'n' Run. No wonder someone tried to suppress it. This thing was hotter than a jalapeno pepper in a sauna.

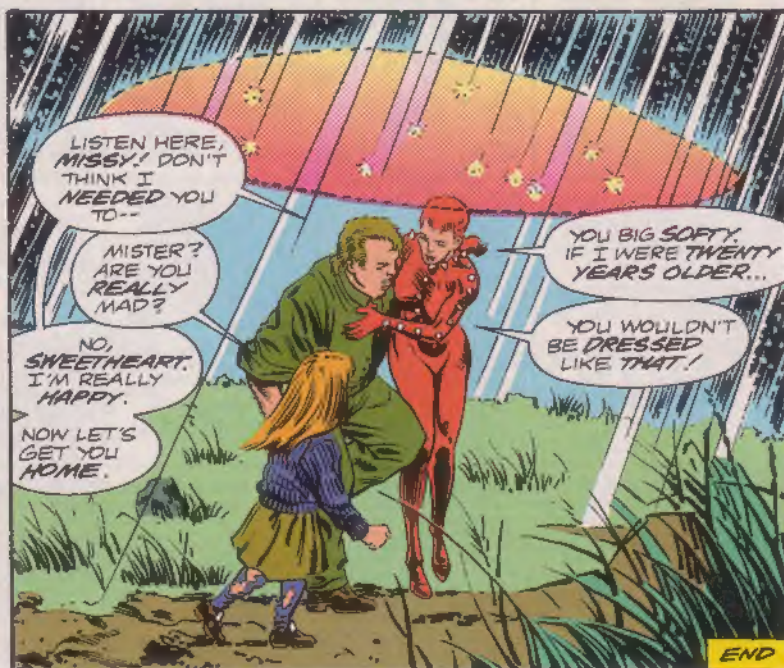
I decided to take the disc to DeFalco. If anyone knew I had this disc, I could start etching my own epitaph. Just then, I felt the cold steel of the barrel of a .45 press against the back of my neck.

IS THIS THE END OF DODGE DEADLINE? YOU WISH









MILLER • VARLEY



DEAD OR ALIVE, SHE'S BACK

ELEKTRA LIVES AGAIN

EPIC[®] HARDCOVER GRAPHIC NOVEL
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS